

Korean Lesson Plan

Purpose

This lesson will explore the history of Korea, with an emphasis on the events that both directly and indirectly led to the Korean War.

Essential Questions:

1. Why is Korea considered geographically important?

Answer: Korea's location was used as a sort of land bridge between Japan and China, making it important for both countries during conflicts between them. Additionally, Korea is surrounded by Japan, China and Russia, the three most powerful countries in the region. This location allowed the country to be included in conflicts amongst these world powers.

2. How did the actions of the United States towards Korea directly and indirectly led to the outbreak of the Korean War?

Answer: Against the will of the Koreans the Americans continued attempting to threaten the Korea's sovereignty for the benefit of the Americans. Examples of these attempts are:

1. 1854 – American merchant ship attempting to force trade with the Koreans run aground.
2. 1871 – President Grant authorizes a naval fleet to be sent to Korea to convince the Koreans to agree to treaties to protect stranded sailors and to trade with the Americans. The mission became violent and ended in the deaths of hundreds of Koreans and the destruction of a key fortress.
3. 1945 – The United States agreed to being responsible for the southern half of Korea following the end of World War II, while the Soviet Union would be responsible for the northern half. Though attempts were made by the United States to reunite the country, they were unsuccessful and turned the responsibility over the newly formed United Nations.

3. How did the actions of Japan towards Korea led to the outbreak of the Korean War?

Answer: The Japanese became interested in the resources of the Korean peninsula. After successfully battling both China and Russia for control of Korean interests, the Japanese made Korea a protectorate and eventually annexed it in 1910.

4. How did the actions of the Soviet Union towards Korea led to the outbreak of the Korean War?

Answer: The Soviet Union considered the division of Korea into northern and southern zones as a permanent arrangement rather than a temporary agreement and refused to agree to a reunification.

Rationale

The new seventh grade social studies textbook in the Toledo Public School system devotes one page of information on the Korean War. Information on Korea prior to that page is limited to a sentence here and there, none of which gives the slightest

explanation as to the history that led to the outbreak of war in 1950. This lesson is designed to be presented to the class before teaching about the Korean War itself.

Materials

- Copies of The War in Korea by E. B. Fincher (or sufficient photocopies of a summary of the first two chapters)
- Paper to be used for illustrated timelines
- Markers, colored pencils or crayons

Activities

1. Pass out copies of The War in Korea or summaries to the entire class.
2. As an entire class, the students should read the information. The teacher should assist the class with understanding the information as they read. The teacher should assist the students in gaining an understanding of the answer to the first essential question.
3. Divide the class into groups of 3-5 students and distribute paper for timelines and markers.
4. Explain to students that their task is to determine what important events occurred in Korean history that may have directly or indirectly led to the outbreak of the Korean War. Once the groups have determined what events they think are important they should create an illustrated timeline with an entry for each event.
5. Once the groups are finished with their timelines, they should create a presentation for the entire class. The presentation should include information about each event and why they chose to include it on their illustrated timeline. During the presentations, the teacher should make sure that all information being presented is factual and applicable to the assignment.

Assessment

During presentations, other groups should be encouraged to comment on the choices that the groups made and the teacher should facilitate discussion of the importance of the events.

Grade Adaptation

This lesson is designed for a seventh grade classroom. To adapt the lesson to a higher grade, I would suggest having pairs of students create a power point presentation of their findings rather than an illustrated timeline. The power point presentation format would allow students to create a presentation with more details about each event.

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